

## CLAIMS

1        1.    An application adapted to run on a client apparatus  
2        connectable with a server across a network, said server adapted  
3        to simultaneously share information maintained therein with a  
4        plurality of heterogeneous clients, wherein said information  
5        comprises a plurality of ideas, said application comprising:

6                means for retrieving said ideas from said server;

7                means for defining a new idea in a manner dependent on the  
8        client apparatus platform; and

9                means for transmitting said new idea to said server for  
10       maintenance in a platform-independent manner.

11       2.    An application as claimed in claim 1 wherein said  
12       application is interactive and includes:

13               means for rendering said retrieved ideas in a manner  
14       dependent on the client apparatus platform; and

15               means, responsive to user interaction, for manipulating said  
16       retrieved ideas.

1       3.    An application as claimed in claim 1 wherein said  
2       application is non- interactive and includes:

3               means, responsive to new ideas of a pre-determined type  
4       transmitted to said server, for defining a search; and

5 wherein said defining means is responsive to said search  
6 results for encoding said results as ideas for transmittal by  
7 said transmitting means to said server.

1 4. An application as claimed in claim 2, wherein said ideas  
2 comprise at least one relationship idea having attributes  
3 defining a link between two lother ideas and wherein said  
4 application includes means for defining a relationship between  
5 two ideas.

1 5. An application as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one  
2 of said ideas includes a name attribute.

1 6. An application as claimed in claim 2 wherein said ideas are  
2 ideas of one or more types and said means for defining is adapted  
3 to define ideas of a pre-determined type.

1 7. An application as claimed in claim 6 wherein said apparatus  
2 further comprises:

3 means, responsive to an idea of a new type being defined,  
4 for adapting said rendering means to render ideas of said new  
5 type.

1 8. An application as claimed in claim 6, wherein said idea  
2 types comprises at least one of thoughts, images and groups of  
3 ideas.

1 9. An application as claimed in claim 6, comprising:

2 means for subscribing to specified idea types such that said  
3 client application is informed when ideas of said type are  
4 transmitted to said server.

1 10. An application as claimed in claim 6, wherein ideas of at  
2 least some of said idea types are defined as being adapted to  
3 contain ideas of at least one idea type.

1 11. An application as claimed in claim 10, comprising:

2 means for constructing a plurality of hierarchies of ideas;  
3 means for moving ideas within a hierarchy according to said  
4 idea types; and

5 means for transferring ideas between hierarchies according  
6 to said idea types.

1 12. An application as claimed in claim 11, comprising:

2 means for selecting one of said rendered ideas; and

3 means for converting said one idea and any ideas below said  
4 one idea in a hierarchy to a markup document comprising  
5 definitions associated with any idea types of ideas within said  
6 hierarchy and definitions of any ideas within said hierarchy.

1 13. An application as claimed in claim 11 comprising:

2 means for loading a markup document comprising definitions  
3 associated with any idea types of ideas within a hierarchy of

ideas in said document and definitions of any ideas within said hierarchy as new ideas.

14. An application as claimed in claim 12, wherein said markup document language is Extensible Markup Language (XML).

15. An application as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for maintaining new ideas at the server stores said new ideas as tuples of a TupleSpace at said server.

16. A computer program product comprising computer program code stored on a computer readable storage medium, the program code comprising an application as claimed in claim 1.

17. A method in an application adapted to run on a client apparatus connectable with a server across a network, said server adapted to simultaneously share information maintained therein with a plurality of heterogeneous clients, wherein said information comprises a plurality of ideas, said method comprising the steps of:

retrieving said ideas from said server;

defining a new idea in a manner dependent on the client apparatus platform; and

transmitting said new idea to said server for maintenance in a platform-independent manner.